

Elite Opponents

Scorpions

By Andy Collins



This column aims to provide DMs with interesting opponents to pit against the PCs in their campaigns. Building off of a simple base -- typically a standard monster from the *Monster Manual* -- each column uses the building blocks provided in the rulebooks to craft a variety of foes. Through the addition of class levels or templates, or even via simple HD advancement, the creatures presented in this column are transformed from run-of-the-mill opponents into memorable foes. Check out this column every month for a new batch of formidable enemies built from a different monster!

The Scorpion: A Toxic Challenge

This month, our base creature is the monstrous scorpion -- a terrifying version of the traditional desert-dwelling vermin. A monstrous scorpion ranges in length from 18 inches to more than 60 feet, and thanks to its Constitution-damaging poison, it is quite capable of sending adventurers of all kinds to their doom. In fact, a single sting from a Gargantuan or Colossal monstrous scorpion can easily kill a character, particularly one already injured by its other attacks.

A monstrous scorpion is likely to attack any creature that approaches it, and it usually couples such an attack with a charge. As a nonintelligent creature, it has no capacity to learn or adapt to changing situations, so it must rely on its claws and sting to defeat its victims. Those rare monstrous scorpions that gain intelligence from a template or other effect need not adhere to these restrictions.



The four monstrous scorpion variants presented in this article range from CR 2 to CR 9. The first two incorporate relatively simple changes to the basic monstrous scorpion and thus can easily be inserted into any campaign, either individually or in numbers. The third variant makes a good NPC opponent for mid-level PCs, and in numbers it could challenge characters of up to 10th level. The fourth version is best used as a unique encounter.

Shadow Scorpion

Shadow scorpions lurk in ruined desert temples, hidden caves, and other dark places, and occasionally some master villain brings a few to other locations to serve as guardians. These creatures use their speed and shadow blend ability to approach prey unseen, grappling with their claws and striking victims with their deadly poison

stingers.

A typical shadow scorpion looks like a pure black scorpion with silver eyes and claw tips. Though its CR is only 2, a colony of 2-5 shadow scorpions has an Encounter Level between 4 and 7, so it can give even mid-level characters a scary surprise.

Shadow Monstrous Scorpion: CR 2; Medium magical beast (augmented vermin); HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 60 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and -3 melee (1d4 plus poison, sting); SA constrict 1d4+1, improved grab, poison; SQ cold resistance 7, damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, shadow blend, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Hide +4, Jump +13, Move Silently +6, Spot +4.

Constrict (Ex): A shadow scorpion deals 1d4+1 points of damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a shadow scorpion must hit with a claw attack.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d3 Con, secondary damage 1d3 Con.

Shadow Blend (Su): In any conditions other than full daylight, a shadow scorpion can disappear into the shadows, giving it total concealment. Artificial illumination -- even a *light* or *continual flame* spell -- does not negate this ability. A *daylight* spell, however, will.

Fire Scorpion

Fire scorpions hail from the Elemental Plane of Fire. As desert denizens, scorpions have a natural affinity for heat, so this combination is a natural one.

A fire scorpion has a deep red carapace and orange claws. Its natural heat makes its constricting attack all the more dangerous, and victims that cannot escape quickly may literally burn to death. Fire laces the creature's poison as well, and victims of its sting often feel as though their bodies are burning up from the inside.

Fire Monstrous Scorpion: CR 4; Large elemental (augmented vermin, fire); HD 5d8+10; hp 32; Init +0; Spd 50 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d6+2 plus poison, sting); SA burn, constrict 1d6+4, heat, improved grab, poison; SQ darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, immunity to fire, tremorsense 60 ft., vulnerability to cold; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 14, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Hide +0, Jump +12, Spot +4.

Burn (Ex): Any creature hit by the natural weapons of a fire scorpion must succeed on a DC 12 Reflex save or catch fire. The fire burns for 1d4 rounds (see *Catching on Fire* in *the Dungeon Master's Guide*). A grappled character who is on fire can't put himself out until after he escapes the grapple.

Constrict (Ex): A fire scorpion deals 1d6+4 points of damage on a successful grapple check.

Heat (Ex): A fire scorpion deals 1d4 points of additional fire damage with its natural weapons.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a fire scorpion must hit with a claw attack.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 14, initial damage 1d4 Con, secondary damage 1d4 Con.

Elemental Traits: A fire scorpion has immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning. It is not subject to critical hits or flanking. It cannot be raised, reincarnated or resurrected (though a *limited wish*, *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection* spell can restore life).

Elite Tauric Drow/Scorpion

In the traditional settings of the **Dungeons & Dragons** game, the drow are closely associated with spiders. The **Eberron** campaign setting, however, associates dark elves with scorpions instead.

The tauric drow/scorpion presented below makes an excellent temple guard or elite killer, and it can easily be advanced in power by adding more class levels. If you're not using the **Eberron** setting, this NPC can be a rogue outcast from the drow without the religious symbolism of the drider, or perhaps even part of a growing splinter cult within the drow kingdom.

This tauric drow/scorpion was built from a Large monstrous scorpion advanced to 8 HD and a drow with two fighter levels. The tauric template appears in *Savage Species* and in *Monster Manual II*, but two modifications to the template have been applied here. First, the creature has the good and poor base saving throws of the base creature, calculated for the number of monstrous humanoid Hit Dice it possesses. Second, it keeps the racial skill bonuses for both the base creature and the base humanoid.

Drow/Scorpion Fighter: Male tauric drow/scorpion fighter 2; CR 7; Large monstrous humanoid (augmented humanoid, augmented vermin); HD 8d8+16 plus 2d8+4; hp 65; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +20; Atk +15 melee (1d8+6, claw) or +12 ranged (2d6+7/x3, +1 *composite longbow* [+6 Str bonus]); Full Atk +15 melee (1d8+6, 2 claws) and +13 melee (1d6+3 plus poison, sting) or +12/+7 ranged (2d6+7/x3, +1 *composite longbow* [+6 Str bonus]); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA constrict 1d8+6, improved grab, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., light blindness, locate secret doors, spell resistance 13, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +5 (+7 against spells and spell-like abilities, +9 against enchantment spells and effects); Str 23, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +23, Hide +14, Jump +14, Listen +9, Search +5, Spot +18; Ability Focus (poison), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Iron Will, Multiattack, Point Blank Shot(B), Rapid Shot(B).

Constrict (Ex): The tauric drow/scorpion deals 1d8+6 points of damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a tauric drow/scorpion must hit with a claw attack.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 18, initial damage 1d4 Con, secondary damage 1d4 Con.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day -- *dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*. Caster level 2nd.

Locate Secret Doors: The tauric drow/scorpion is entitled to a Search check when within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door as though actively looking for it.

Light Blindness: Abrupt exposure to bright light blinds the tauric drow/scorpion for 1 round. On subsequent rounds, it is dazzled as long as it remains in the affected area.

Possessions: +1 *composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus), 10 arrows, 10 adamantine arrows, *bracers of armor* +3, *ring of protection* +1, gold scorpion medallion (1,000 gp), 25 pp.

Chimeric Scorpion

Long ago, an unknown wizard used foul magics to combine two of the desert's deadliest denizens -- the blue dragon and the Huge monstrous scorpion. Sadly, this chimeric scorpion's offspring have spread to the point that they can now be found in warm deserts everywhere.

The chimeric scorpion makes a terrifying foe and has a variety of powerful attacks at its disposal. Since it retains the scorpion's mindless nature, however, it is incapable of employing any strategy or tactics.

Chimeric Monstrous Scorpion: CR 9; Huge magical beast (augmented vermin); HD 10d10+50; hp 105; Init +0; Spd 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor); AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +7; Grp +23; Atk +13 melee (2d6+8, bite); Full Atk +13 melee (2d6+8, bite) and +11 melee (2d4+4 plus poison, sting) and +11 melee (1d8+4, 2 claws) and +11 melee (1d8+4, butt); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (40-ft. line of lightning), constrict 1d8+4, improved grab, poison; SQ darkvision 60 ft., scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 11, Con 20, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Hide -4, Jump +16, Listen +2, Spot +6; Multiattack.

Breath Weapon (Su): Every 1d4 rounds, the chimeric scorpion's blue dragon head can emit a 40-foot-long line of lightning that deals 3d8 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 20 half).

Constrict (Ex): A chimeric scorpion deals 1d8+4 points of damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a chimeric scorpion must hit with a claw attack.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 1d6 Con.

About the Author

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